

# Did You Know?

## VAPORIZING ALCOHOL

**SEP 14**

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The rapid and intense intoxication that comes from inhaling alcohol vapors carries a greater risk for addiction and dependence. When alcohol vapor is inhaled, it goes straight from the lungs to the brain and bloodstream, getting the individual drunk very quickly. Because the alcohol bypasses the stomach and liver, it isn't metabolized, and the alcohol doesn't lose any of its potency. Drinkers feel the effects almost instantly, but the risks are also much higher. People who smoke their alcohol are at a much greater risk of getting alcohol poisoning and potentially overdosing



There are possible health and safety risks of inhaling alcohol vapors. Inhalation devices make it "substantially easier to overdose on alcohol" than drinking, because the alcohol bypasses the stomach and liver and goes directly into the bloodstream, and because the user does not have a reliable way of determining how much alcohol they have taken in. Inhaled alcohol cannot be purged from the body by vomiting, which is the body's main protection against alcohol poisoning. Inhaled alcohol can dry out nasal passages and make them more susceptible to infection. Direct inhalation may cause nerve damage, brain swelling and, in the long term, dementia.

Also known as "smoking" alcohol, this dangerous practice can be created by heating alcohol or by pouring alcohol over dry ice. The alcohol enters the system through the mucous membrane of the lungs where it then travels to the brain and bloodstream. Intoxication can happen almost instantaneously and alcohol poisoning becomes a very real and scary possibility.

**Myths:** Many people believe that by inhaling alcohol, they are avoiding calories that come with alcoholic beverages. However, ethanol, the active ingredient in alcohol, has calories and they are still absorbed in the body when inhaled.

Those under 21 might be tempted to try "vaporizing" alcohol because they believe that it's legal. But consuming alcohol, in any form, is still illegal if you're not 21 years old or over.

Vaporizing alcohol has been publicized as a way to experience the effects of alcohol without the hangover. This is not true, many users report experiencing hangover-like symptoms, including nausea, headaches, lightheadedness and dizziness.

In the end, if you choose to vaporize and inhale alcohol, it will get you drunk very quickly. You will however, increase your chance of a deadly overdose and potential addiction significantly.